

The Ending Was Already Spoiled

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Summary: Her father was the smartest man she knew, but even the best doctor could not cure death. â€” Chizuru/Okita oneshot.

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****The Ending Was Already Spoiled****

Perhaps it was her bias speaking, but her father was the best doctor in town.

His patients were manyâ€” children recklessly breaking a leg or an arm, a housewife with a swollen belly, or the disheveled sailor reeking of alcohol. But no matter who it was, they always came to him. There was one in particular she remembered quite well, a young girl fragile and delicate like a flower.

Unlike the patients that would thank her father after he's treated them, she never said anything. She never smiled and her eyes were always listless. But she would always come back eventually; sometimes covered in bruises, sometimes cuts, sometimes a combination both. No matter what it was, or how severe the injuries, he would always fix her up and send her on her way until the next time she visited them.

And then, one day, she simply stopped coming.

The next and last time Chizuru would see her, she's carried to their doorstep by the police.

Her father looks her body over and confirms her cause of death a suicide.

She couldn't understand it.

"Chizuru," his face tired, voice defeated, "It's inevitable. She

simply got tired of it all and decided to write her own ending herself."

Her father was the smartest man she knew, but even the best doctor could not cure death.

What does it mean to be saved?

It's a question she asks herself when she first encounters those shinsengumi blues.

When Sannan returns to them with injured arm and injured pride.

When they drag Heisuke's broken body away from the chasms of death with intent to cheat it, if only for a little bit.

What does it mean to be alive?

* * *

><p>Autumn is the season she loves and hates the most.<p>

It's in autumn that Chizuru remembers that girl from long ago, how everything will eventually die. But at the same time, there's an eerie but sad elegance to it all. Like how the leaves on a tree, though small and frail in the face of the wind, bleed the most beautiful reds and golds in their last moments. It's only when one is dying that they are most beautiful, the most alive.

In a way, Okita was like autumn.

Okita never fails to remind her of her own mortality.

Each time he points his sword at her, all of the things she wants to do flashes through her mind—reuniting with her father and telling him all about her time with the Shinsengumi, becoming important to someone, cooking his favorite meals, bearing his children, growing old together with him, sharing smiles with him all the way to happily ever after. Compared to grandiose dreams of reviving a clan, saving the country from the foreigners that threatened to destroy it, or unifying the people and bringing peace back into their lives, they were frivolous, insignificant things. Never enough to convince him to spare her life, if he was serious. But they were all things that she knew she would regret not being able to do if she died then and there.

And like autumn, it's when Okita's dying that he's most beautiful; a tiny flame that's about to extinguish but desperately tries to do anything to stay alight, even if it means consuming everyone around him. It was such a human quality that she, whose pains and wounds always faded away in the matter of minutes, found herself lacking.

Perhaps that's why she couldn't hate him, why felt so drawn to him.

Chizuru knew that approaching him would mean there'd be times she'll get burnt, but it's the times she's with him that she feels most alive.

* * *

><p>Okita has fallen asleep next to her. The air is cool and the moon is a floating silver ball in a sea of velvet sky. Around them are a field of flowers as endless as the stars that sparkle over their heads. A painting so serene, she could almost dream of things that aren't Kaoru and gunshots and flames and blood. There aren't men to kill or killers to run from. It's only the two of them in their own little world.<p>

There's a temptation planted in her heart. They could leave everything behind, pretend that the wars raging around them are distant nightmares, forget about saving the country, and just lay here forever.

It's a dangerous thought, she knows.

There are comrades to catch up to, cures to find, loose ends to tie up.

So she rests her head against his chest and lets his heartbeat lull herself to sleep.

She dreams of returning 'home', freeing their bodies from the curses that weigh them down, and going back to those days when they could watch sunsets together.

* * *

><p>His eyes are deader than Kondou.<p>

A mockery of the vibrant green that used to entrance her that she can't stand it and shuts them closed. Like this, his face was as calm as the surface of a lake, as if the anguish he'd been in mere moments ago had never happened. She could fool herself into think that he's simply sleeping.

But the sword in his chest was cruel, like it's owner, to remind her the reality.

He has left her behind, as usual.

And it would be up to her to chase after his silhouette, as usual.

It's unfair.

She did her best to be a good girl, didn't cause too much trouble for anyone, didn't ask for many things, and life couldn't grant her this much.

Like this, his corpse in her arms, Okita never fails to remind her of her own mortality. But this time, there is no fear.

Chizuru turns to her family's heirloom at her waist. Cold metal sears her flesh, the cut almost as deep as the sorrow in her heart. The regrets she'd been keeping to herself spill with her woundsâ€” cooking his favorite meals for him, bearing his children, growing old with him, among them all are his achingly beautiful smiles.

This is probably the closest she's ever felt to being like a human,
she notes with a slipping dullness.

it bleeds

and bleeds

and

End
file.